

WHAT'S *New*

in the Metropolitan Police Department



*A weekly update for residents, visitors,
and workers in the District of Columbia*

Friday, July 23, 2004

CHIEF RAMSEY ANNOUNCES CRIME INITIATIVE TO HELP COMBAT JUVENILE AUTO THEFT

As part of a broader, citywide effort to combat auto theft involving juveniles, Chief Ramsey this week announced a new Crime Initiative to deal with that problem, as well as continuing concerns over juvenile violence and aggressive robberies. This year's Crime Initiative is more limited than the Department-wide initiative Chief Ramsey declared last summer to deal with an upsurge in violence. This year, crime is down in all categories citywide, but DC continues to confront serious problems with youth homicides, the theft and unauthorized use of stolen vehicles, and aggressive robbery offenses. Under the current initiative, the Chief has suspended the scheduling provisions of the collective bargaining agreement with those units that focus on the targeted problems, including district focused mission teams, district detectives, auto theft units, forensic sciences and others. This move gives unit commanders greater flexibility in adjusting these members' work schedules to more effectively combat the priority crime problems when and where they are occurring. "I am confident that through a more focused and targeted response to crime, we will enhance both community and officer safety," Chief Ramsey said.

- ① Mayor Williams has announced a comprehensive five-point plan to address the problem of juveniles stealing and recklessly driving automobiles. In addition to stepped-up enforcement, the plan includes tougher laws and increased intervention of human services to provide alternatives for young people. Details at: <http://dc.gov/mayor/news/release.asp?id=617&mon=200407>

- ① Learn how you and your family can help reduce the risk of having your vehicle stolen at: <http://www.mpd.c.dc.gov/info/traffic/autotheft.shtm>

MPDC, NATIONAL CAPITAL POLICE FUND JOIN IN CREATION OF NEW PLAYGROUND IN SURSUM CORDA

Earlier this year, the MPDC designated Sursum Corda as one of 14 "hot spots" around this city, meaning that the Northwest community is receiving increased public safety attention from police and other city services. But in developing its hot-spot strategies, city leaders realized they needed to do more than increase patrols, make arrests and clean up trash. They needed to provide resources and hope for the future – starting with a safe and fun place for area children to play. This week, the National Capital Police Fund, the MPDC and its partners joined with Sursum Corda residents to build a state-of-the-art, 5,000-square-foot playground in one day. The impetus for the project was a request in March from Chief Ramsey to the National Capital Police Fund to build the playground. Under the leadership of Police Fund Chairman George (Pat) Clancy Jr., the National Capital Police Fund responded immediately by providing initial seed money, and major in-kind logistical support with the pledge to have the playground designed and built this summer. Under the leadership of KaBOOM, more than 300 volunteers from area Home Depot stores, AmeriCorps*NCCC members, and community residents donated their time to build the new playground, based on drawings neighborhood children submitted at a Design Day event in June. Many Washington-area businesses generously contributed goods and services to make the new Sursum Corda playground a reality.

- ① Read the entire news release at: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp?sid=2797>
- ① Formed in 2000, the National Capital Police Fund augments the public safety work of the MPDC through direct financial grants, in-kind donated goods and services, and other support. Financial support for the Police Fund's programs is provided by area businesses, foundations and individual contributions.
- ① To provide fun and constructive activities for DC youth this summer, the MPDC continues to carry out its "40 Days of Increased Peace" initiative. To learn about events in your community, contact your local police district.

WITH PLANS TO HIRE MORE OFFICERS OVER THE NEXT YEAR, THE MPDC WILL HOLD A CAREER EXPO ON AUGUST 14

With the goal of attracting more than 1,000 police officer applicants over the next year, the MPDC kicks off its 2004-2005 recruiting season with a Career Expo on Saturday, August 14, 2004, from 9 am to 5 pm, at the Washington Convention Center, 801 Mount Vernon Place, NW. Recruiters will be on hand to discuss career opportunities in the MPDC with both entry-level candidates and experienced officers from other agencies who are interested in joining the MPDC through its lateral-hire program. Interested applicants can complete application forms and take the written police test on-site at the Expo. Career Expo 2004 also offers prospective police officers and their families an inside look at the MPDC. Representatives from many of the Department's patrol and specialized enforcement units will be on hand to demonstrate their latest equipment, training and techniques. Specialized recruiting resources for female, Asian and Latino candidates will also be available. The MPDC is looking to attract more than 1,000 applicants this year and hire hundreds of new police officers, as the Department continues to build up to, and maintain, its authorized strength of 3,800 sworn members.

WAVE III OF "SMOOTH OPERATOR" PROGRAM TO TARGET AGGRESSIVE DRIVERS

For the third time this summer, the MPDC is joining dozens of other area law enforcement agencies in cracking down on aggressive driving, during Wave III of this year's Smooth Operator campaign. From July 25 through July 31, officers will be targeting motorists who speed, run red lights and stop signs, tailgate, improperly change lanes and engage in other aggressive driving behaviors. During the first two waves of Smooth Operator earlier this summer, the MPDC issued more than 27,000 citations. The theme of this year's Smooth Operator campaign is "Aggressive Driving Is Contagious – Catch It and You're Caught!" Through both aggressive enforcement carried out in four, week-long waves and an extensive media campaign, Smooth Operator is reminding area motorists of the consequences of aggressive driving, including fines, jail time or worse – injuring or killing someone.

NEWS & NOTES

National Night Out Is August 3. All DC residents are encouraged to take part in this year's National Night Out against Crime celebration, on Tuesday, August 3. Crime prevention events and activities are planned for all seven police districts. To find out what's going on in your community, call your local police district or go to: <http://mpdc.dc.gov/serv/programs/nno.shtm>

Chief on WOL Radio. Chief Ramsey discusses public safety issues and takes phone calls from 5-6 pm, on Wednesday, July 28, during his monthly appearance on the "Live at Five" program on WOL 1450-AM.

Distracted Driving Law in Effect. Motorists are reminded that talking on a hand-held mobile telephone while driving is now illegal in DC. Use of mobile phones with a hands-free accessory is allowed under the law. For the remainder of July, MPDC officers will be issuing warnings only. But beginning August 1, violators face a \$100 fine. Get details at <http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/distracteddriver.shtm>

① Read the complete news release at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp?sid=2801>

① More information about Career Expo 2004, including the requirements for becoming a police officer, can be found at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/about/employ/officer.shtm>

① Current civilian job vacancies in the MPDC are listed at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/about/employ/civilian.shtm>

① For complete details on Smooth Operator 2004, go to:
<http://www.mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/smoothop.shtm>

① The fourth and final wave of Smooth Operator will take place August 22-28.

DATA BOX

Homicides (as of 7/23/04)

- 2004: 107
- 2003: 141
- % Change: -24.4%

Closure Rate: 51.4% (55 closures)

Adult Arrests (week end. 7/14/04)

- Total: 1,060
- Drugs: 152
- Motor Vehicle Theft: 17
- Prostitution/Sex Offenses: 59

Firearm Recoveries (as of 7/20/04)

- Total: 1,150
- July: 104

Traffic Fatalities (as of 7/16/04)

- 2004: 31
- 2003: 38
- % Change: +18.4%